

Eleftherios Netos 02/18/2010 04:58:11 PM From DB/Inbox: Eleftherios Netos

Cable
Text:

UNCLASSIFIED
TELEGRAM

February 05, 2010

To: SECSTATE WASHDC - ROUTINE
Action: VO
From: AMEMBASSY NICOSIA (NICOSIA 73 - ROUTINE)
TAGS: CVIS, PREL, CY
Captions: SENSITIVE
Subject: CYPRUS REEMPHASIZES INTEREST IN THE VISA WAIVER PROGRAM
Ref: None

Additional Addressees:
None

cc:
DEPT OF HOMELAND SECURITY WASHINGTON DC

Distribution:

TED4010
ACTION VO-00

INFO	LOG-00	EEB-00	AF-00	AMAD-00	CA-00	CIAE-00	DODE-00
	DOTE-00	DS-00	DHSE-00	EUR-00	FAAE-00	FBIE-00	UTED-00
	VCI-00	H-00	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	LAB-01	L-00
	MOFM-00	MOF-00	VCIE-00	DCP-00	NSAE-00	OIC-00	OIG-00
	EPAU-00	PER-00	PPT-00	DOHS-00	NCTC-00	FMP-00	R-00
	EPAE-00	ECA-00	DSCC-00	PRM-00	DRL-00	SAS-00	FA-00
	SWCI-00	PESU-00	/001W				

-----1CFAF4 051728Z /38

R 051449Z FEB 10
FM AMEMBASSY NICOSIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0507
INFO DEPT OF HOMELAND SECURITY WASHINGTON DC

UNCLAS NICOSIA 000073

SENSITIVE

DEPT FOR CA/VO/F/P AND EUR/SE

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PREL](#) [CVIS](#) [CY](#)
SUBJECT: Cyprus Reemphasizes Interest in the Visa Waiver Program

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: In response to a Cypriot request, the Ambassador met on February 4 at the MFA with Permanent Secretary Nicolas Emiliou and representatives of similar rank from other ministries to discuss the Visa Waiver Program (VWP). Emiliou reiterated Cyprus' strong desire to join the VWP and catalogued benefits to both countries. The Ambassador encouraged Cyprus to work toward satisfying statutory requirements but explained that the evolving terrorist threat facing the United States requires DHS to focus on issues other than expansion of the VWP. ConOff accompanied the Ambassador as note taker. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) Emiliou opened the meeting by stating that Cyprus formally expressed its request to join the VWP in 2005 and has been working toward that goal since then. He said that Cyprus is scheduled to begin issuing e-passports that meet ICAO and Schengen standards in August 2010. He stated that accession to the VWP would improve Cypriot public opinion of the United States and encourage

more Cypriots to travel to the United States. Emiliou noted that both the Cypriot public and government are acutely aware that most EU countries are members of the VWP while Cyprus is not. (NOTE: Bulgaria, Greece, Poland and Romania are the EU countries in addition to Cyprus that are not members of the VWP. End Note.) Emiliou concluded his opening comments by stating that U.S. acceptance of Cyprus into the VWP would favorably affect the atmosphere of bilateral relations.

13. (SBU) The Ambassador said that he and the Embassy support Cyprus' desire to join the VWP. He reminded Emiliou that his personal goals are to increase Cypriot trade with, travel to, and academic study in the United States and that Cypriot accession to the VWP probably would contribute to the attainment of each of those goals. The Ambassador then cautioned that the worldwide security environment is making accession to the VWP progressively more difficult for aspirant countries. He pointed out that Cyprus and other aspirant countries have not done any wrong. Instead, the changing terrorist threat confronting the United States, as exemplified by the attempted airline bombing on Christmas Day, has forced DHS to concentrate on security issues that prevent it from addressing the conditions under which aspirant countries may qualify for the VWP. The Ambassador commended Cyprus' low nonimmigrant visa refusal rate and its progress toward issuing an e-passport. (NOTE: Embassy Nicosia consular records indicate that for the three-year period January 1, 2007 through December 31, 2009, the NIV refusal rate from Cypriots was 1.93 and that the adjusted refusal rate for the same period was 1.03 percent. End Note.) The Ambassador encouraged Cyprus to continue to work toward fulfilling each of the statutory requirements but emphasized that satisfaction of those requirements would not guarantee accession to the VWP. The Ambassador conceded that he did not know when DHS would be able to address in a specific manner Cyprus' eligibility for the VWP.

14. (SBU) Emiliou concluded the meeting by stating that accession to the VWP continues to be a priority for his government. He said Cyprus is doing everything it can to meet the eligibility criteria. He said that his government hopes to reach an agreement with DHS that includes a sense of finality but that he understands that a specific date for accession is not possible at this time.

Urbancic